1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
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They climb high trees, And sit quietly
on their boughs, in order to plunder the hives 147
concealed there, without any sense of danger [222 48 75]
or giddiness. After their removal to our colo-
nies, being fatigued with handling the axe and [753]
the plough, instruments to which they were
unaccustomed, and feeling their strength fail
them, their bodies bathed in sweat, and burn-
ing with heat, they exclaimed, *La yivichigui*
yauigra, now my blood is angry. For this they 757●
have a ready remedy: they plunge a knife deep
into their leg, watch the blood spouting from
it for some time with pleased eyes, and at
length stop it by applying a clod to the wound,
saying with a cheerful voice that they are re-
covered, and feel perfectly well. They are 147
as lavish, and almost prodigal in shedding 304
their blood, for the purpose of obtaining glory,
as of procuring health; for in public drink-
ing parties they cruelly prick their breast,
arms and tongue with a bundle of thorns, or
with the sharp bones of a crocodile's back, with
much effusion of blood. They emulate one [703]
another in doing this, in order to obtain a re-
putation for bravery, and that these sponta-
neous wounds may render them less fearful of
shedding their blood in engagements with the
enemy, and may make their skin impenetrable
by covering it with scars. Boys of seven years [866]
old pierce their little arms in imitation of their

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CHAPTER XXI.

OF THE DISEASES, PHYSICIANS, AND MEDICINES OF THE ABIPONES.

I HAVE long since described the Abipones to be stout, vigorous, and robust; and unless I am much deceived, have already proved in chapter the seventh, that the diseases, which in Europe fill houses with sick persons, and graves with dead bodies, are unknown here. Epilepsy, gout, lethargy, madness, jaundice, diseases in the joints, complaints in the kidneys, elephantiasis, iliac disorders, &c. are names strange and foreign to the Abipones. You scarce hear once in three years of any of them dying of a fever, pleurisy, or consumption. Sickness is more rare amongst them than an Aurora Borealis, or an eclipse with us. I never heard any of them complain of tooth-ache except an old woman, who soon stopped the pain with a few drops of vinegar. I do not wonder that the savages should be exempt from so common a complaint, as they are accustomed from childhood to chew tobacco leaves mixed with salt and the saliva of old women, and reduced into the form of an unguent. It is not improperly, therefore, that

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It is not improperly, therefore, that
they call tobacco *noctá*, their medicine: for they are constantly eating honey, both in a solid and liquid state, which is the certain destruction of the teeth; so that the Indians must suffer continual torment from them, or soon be deprived of them altogether, were not the bad effects of the honey counteracted by the acrimony of the salt and tobacco. Experience shows that persons who smoke or chew tobacco every day will preserve their teeth sound. I have seen Spaniards of the higher orders in Paraguay either chew or smoke tobacco, and take delight in it as of certain utility to the health. But the Paraguayrians have another remedy against the tooth-ache. The pods of the cacáo are steeped for some time in brandy. Cotton dipped in this liquor is applied to the tooth, which, if not hollow, is well moistened with that brandy, which should be held a long time in the mouth. If you repeat this several times, both the swelling and the pain will entirely cease. My own frequent experience, joined with that of others, has taught me the efficacy of this noble medicine, which is celebrated even in Europe. The freshest and most juicy pods must be chosen for the purpose, for what virtue will the old decayed ones yield, which are destitute of oil? The milder drinkable brandy should be used, not that fiery liquor which chemists call

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683 colony of St. Ferdinand, a Yaucaniga, famed
761 amongst his countrymen both for high birth
754 and military prowess, and on that very account ready for any audacious action, was much afflicted at the untimely death of his little daughter. He knew that she had been weak and diseased from her birth, yet was fully bent upon finding out the magical author of her death. A foreign Indian woman married to an Abipon appeared to him, from the representations of certain old women, who bore her a grudge, to be the perpetrator of the crime. Infuriated by the supposed injury, and the desire of vengeance, he fell upon the innocent unsuspecting woman at the approach of night, as she was spinning at the fire; he pierced her shoulder-blade with a spear with such force, that the point came out in the middle of her bosom, and stained the child she was suckling with its mother's blood. The woman was middle-aged, very fat, and full-breasted. She swam in her own blood, which spouted from every vein. The horrid nature of the wound
• [757] threatening certain death, the heads of our holy religion, which she had formerly learnt, were briefly recalled to her memory; she received baptism, and was admonished to forgive her murderer. Having thus attended to the sal-
752 vation of the poor woman's soul, we applied all our thoughts towards retarding her death,

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A 757

Though sucking is the chief and almost only cure in use amongst the Abipones, yet they have some dream-like ideas of our remedies. At times, when oppressed by the heat of the sun, or inflamed with a feverish burning, they will draw blood by piercing their arm or leg with a knife. Medicinal herbs, of which their country produces so great a variety, they scarce know by name, yet are desirous of being thought well skilled in the mysteries of nature. Hence, not so much in the desire of restoring the sick person, as of increasing their own reputation, they would sometimes prescribe the leaves of a tree, or the roots of some little known plant, on which the druggist might safely write *quid pro quo*, these remedies being generally of such a nature, that they are more likely to miss than be of any service. At the end of a fatiguing journey, I fell ill in the town of Concepcion. A woman, of high repute for skill in the healing art, comes and gives me a large dark root, promising me the complete restoration of my health, if I would drink it well boiled in water. I shuddered at the medicine, but still more at the old hag that prescribed it.

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The Guarany tongue is as rich as the Abiponian is poor in the names of wholesome plants, and not a few of the Guaranics are well acquainted with the use of them. In the town

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G IN THE TOWN
759 of St. Joachim I knew an Indian named Igna-
752 cio Yaricà, eight years an attendant upon the sick, whose dexterity and success I could not but admire. He would set a broken limb, and entirely heal it in a very short time by means of swathes of reeds and four little herbs. The woods of America also produce a kind of dark green ivy, which twines itself round the branches of trees, and is called by the Spaniards *suelda con suelda*. This plant cut small, boiled in water, and bound with linen on to the limb, soon and happily consolidates it. In the city of Corrientes, a Spanish matron was cured of a sprained foot, by merely wrapping it in the fresh skin of a puppy. The Abipones are to-
A 757 tally ignorant of medicines for purging the bowels, causing perspiration, removing bile, and dispelling noxious humours. They will not even bear the mention of an enema. In the town of St. Jeronymo, a Spanish soldier who professed the art of medicine, being requested by Father Brigniel to attend upon a sick Abipon, declared the necessity of an injection. No sooner did the sick man feel the syringe applied to him, than he started furiously out of bed, snatched up a lance, and would have slain the soldier physician, had he not saved himself by hasty flight. Sudden terror giving way to rage, the old Spaniard, whilst we were laughing,

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poured forth a volley of curses on his ungrateful patient. "You had better call up a devil from hell, Fathers," said he, "to cure this beast. When I offered him medicine, the savage tried to kill me: he opposes a lance to a syringe. Who could contend with such unequal arms?" The Guaranies have the same repugnance to the use of the syringe. The Indians use snuff as a medicine, stuffing it into their ears, when they find them badly affected by the rain or wind. The jugglers vauntingly affirm, that they have it in their power to perform cures by words alone. Sitting on the sick man's bed they sing extemporary verses, as magical charms, either to reconcile the evil spirit, or to call up the shades of the dead by whose assistance they hope to remove all diseases. But away with this superstitious nonsense. The Abiponian physicians show how little they confide in their own arts, when, on being seized with a disorder, they neglect to consult their colleagues, and prefer the aid of any European who will prescribe for them. At the time that I dwelt amongst the Abipones, the most famous in the art of medicine was Pariekaikin, the chief of the jugglers, who, on being seized with pleurisy, called on me to heal him in preference to any of his colleagues. Calcined hartshorn, boiled in barley-water, re-